

Snow Ball '84 by TribalVipe

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family, Humor

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., J. Hopper

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-06-13 15:06:12

Updated: 2018-06-13 15:06:12

Packaged: 2019-12-16 23:24:56

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,880

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Hopper is out of his depth and Eleven goes to the Snow Ball.

Snow Ball '84

A/N: This is my very first Stranger Things fic and it's centered around Hopper and Eleven and the amazing relationship they have. I absolutely love them and I decided to write up this little one-shot. Hope you guys like it! I don't own Stranger Things or its characters. Enjoy!

Hopper hadn't the first clue about school dances or anything related to school functions, really.

Most of his time in school, he was out screwing chicks in the backseat of his car or skipping class and smoking under the steps, thinking about getting the hell out of this tiny little town he now watched over. School dances never even made it onto his radar, and the only reason he ever went to his senior prom, was because his mother begged him to.

He licked his lips and looked around the store, seeing it empty save for the cashier and a woman checking out at the counter. He looked sorely out of place, standing tall above the racks in the girl's department. He tugged his hat further down over his eyes, hoping the store would stay empty until he found a suitable dress his newly adopted telekinetic teenage kid would appreciate.

She didn't even know she was going to be allowed to go. Really, he still was on the fence about letting her go, but after getting the green light from Owens and getting fed up with Joyce pestering him about letting her go have a fun night out with her friends (and Mike, who was annoyingly depressed every time he shot down the idea of him coming over to see El), he decided it couldn't hurt. Not if he sat out in the parking lot the entire time and kept watch.

"Need help with something, Chief?"

He bit back an irritated sigh and willed the blush staining his cheeks to go away as he set some frilly pink monstrosity back on the rack to face the friendly voice. Donna eyed with him a flirtatious smile and it took him a moment to remember that he hadn't slept with her.

People tended to get the wrong impression of him and his womanizing ways. Contrary to popular belief, he hadn't slept his way through town, and he was glad that bad habit came to a dead stop last year, when everything went to shit.

"Uh...", he gestured towards the rack and crossed his arms, "Just... browsing."

"In the girl's department?"

"Yeah. My...my niece is in town and, I uh, she's going to the dance with her friend who lives here and she doesn't have a dress."

"Oh...I didn't know you had siblings."

Shit. He smiled down at her, wracking his brain. "I don't. My ex-wife. Her family and I are still close. Her niece comes to visit from time to time..."

Donna furrowed her brow but he was quick to cut her off, "Anyway! I need a dress for her and I don't know what's in right now with the kids."

He breathed a sigh of relief when she just smiled sweetly and led him to a new rack. He knew lying to someone in this small of a town was risky, but he hadn't had the chance to talk to Eleven about her status as his child yet. He planned on bringing it up the day of the dance, when he revealed that she would be going, but until then, he didn't want anyone knowing a thing about her.

"Hopper? Are you listening?"

"What?"

"I asked what size she is."

"Oh, she's uh, small. Petite, I guess? He cringed at her adoring smile, knowing he must have sounded confused as all hell. He only knew her size from the fact that he was able to successfully rummage through the Varner's garage sale just down the road from his trailer for clothes that fit her. Sure, they were all boy's clothes, but they couldn't be that different to girl's clothing."

"Hmm, how about this?"

He blinked at the turquoise nightmare and shook his head. He didn't know a damn about El's favorite colors or if she had any, but he wouldn't let her leave his house dressed like that. He wanted her to have a good time, not be embarrassed to death by his choice in dress.

Donna led him around to a few more racks, and after a frustrating amount of 'no's', she finally pulled one out that caught his attention. It was a dark grey with pink polka dots and a pink belt. Just the right amount of girly but not enough to make him want to vomit in his mouth. He nodded his head a slow smile forming on his face.

"Perfect. I'll take it."

The reaction to the news that she had been formally adopted by him went better than he thought it would. He hadn't asked her beforehand if she liked the idea, but then again, it wasn't as if she had a choice. The legal loopholes Owens had to jump through just to pull these kinds of strings were massive and it was all in the name of letting her lead a normal life. She was just fine with it, though. After he explained what that meant, she smiled and said, "Ok."

Calm as ever. Until he told her she would be attending the Snow Ball at the middle school and he was taken aback by just how excited she was. Eleven had a hard time processing new emotions, and excitement certainly wasn't one she had ever fully felt before. He could see in her eyes the confusion at her own behavior, and he had to force a smile to tell her it was ok that she broke a few lightbulbs in the house when she became excited.

He was cleaning up the shattered bulbs when there was a sharp knock on the door, and a few seconds later, Nancy came barreling in with a bag full of makeup and hair products. She smiled at the mess on the ground, "Excited or angry?"

"Excited. If it was angry, I'd probably be a pile of ash."

"Where is she?"

"Watching TV in her room," he pointed at the door that was cracked. Nancy only took a few steps before Eleven appeared, a hesitant look on her face. He had toyed with the idea of asking Joyce to come over, but he figured she was far too busy getting Will ready, and he knew she was hesitant to leave his side just yet. Nancy was the next best option, even though her and El had limited contact. Still, Eleven welcomed a quick hug from her before the older swept her off to the bathroom, leaving him to quiet living room by himself.

He ended up cleaning a few things up in the kitchen and was outside, sweeping off the porch when Nancy came back out, a triumphant smile on her face.

"That was quick," he commented, leading her down the steps.

"She doesn't have much hair and she wasn't too fond of the makeup, so."

"Thanks for doing this. I owe you one," he called after her, but she just waved and said she would see him later. He looked around the outside of the cabin wearily before he went back in. He stopped by the door, seeing her emerge from the bathroom, still dressed in jeans and a long sleeve t-shirt.

"How is it?"

She looked unsure, but he quickly appeased her insecurity, "You look beautiful, kid."

She smiled again and he plucked the garment bag off the hook, where it had been hidden by his puffer jacket. He unzipped it and pulled it out of the bag, turning the dress towards her. The smile off her face and her eye grew wide as she approached. Her fingers brushed against the material, reverently, like it was the prettiest thing in the world.

"Mine?"

He nodded and smiled, handing it over to her. It took her a minute, but she eventually took the hanger and held it close to her, running her hand over the material again. He wanted to crack a joke about it

just being a dress, and her handling it like fine china, but he supposed she hadn't ever had a dress before. She hadn't experienced a lot of things before, and it made his heart twinge in his chest when he realized that this was probably a big deal for her. One she may not fully understand.

"Do you like it?"

She looked up at him and he was slightly taken aback to see some tears shining in her eyes. She nodded and rushed forward to hug him. He caught her and kissed the top of her head, grimacing when pulled back with hairspray covering his mouth. She laughed a little at his complaint and left him in a hurry to try on the dress.

"Alright, kid," he said as he pulled into a parking space near the front of the parking lot, "We need to go over a few ground rules."

Eleven gave him a wary look, but he continued on. He wasn't going to be so much of a dictator this time, but there were still dangers they needed to consider. He glanced around the parking lot, seeing middle schoolers and a few parent chaperones making their way to the gymnasium. He didn't care for the eye roll she gave him, but he let it pass since she put up with the annoying amount of Polaroids he'd taken before they left the house. It was worth spending ten minutes taking countless pictures. He had finally gotten a good one, that was taped to the fridge with his sloppy handwriting underneath her forced smile that said 'Snow Ball '84'.

"First, if someone asks you your name, it's Jane. Not Eleven. Your friends might call you that, but to strangers, it's Jane. Second, I want you to stick with Mike and them. Don't leave the gym for any reason. If you have to go to the bathroom, talk to Nancy and she'll go with you. Third, keep a reasonable distance from Mike when you're dancing, got it? If I can't fit in between you two while you're dancing, there's a problem. And lastly," he looked her straight in the eye and smiled, "Have fun, kid. You deserve it."

She smiled and nodded, reaching out to give his hand a squeeze. He looked down and breathed deep, seeing Sarah's bracelet around her wrist. She wasn't aware, but him allowing her to wear that bracelet

was a huge step for him. It signified more than she could ever know or that he would want her to know. This random girl...this science experiment, had somehow wiggled her way into his heart without her knowing it. Swallowing down any fear of danger, he nodded at her and turned off the car engine, prepared to let her start her night.

"Alright, let's do this."